

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Women's Life Care Center
Location/Address	2870 Middle Street Little Canada, MN 55117
Date and Location of Site Visit	5/22/17; Women's Life Care Center, Little Canada, MN
Grantee Participants	Mary Lietzke, Executive Director; Jacinta Lagasse, Program Director
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman
Grant Agreement #/PO #	109531

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current?

Yes

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes

3. Where is this central file located?

In the Executive Director's Office, both paper and electronic

4. Who is responsible for this central file?

The Executive Director and Program Director

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? Yes
- The award letter? Yes
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? Yes
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? Yes
- The work plan? Yes
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? Yes
- Any/all signed subcontracts? Not applicable (no subcontracts)
- Any/all Progress Reports? Yes

CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors?

N/A

2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate?

No

3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation?

N/A

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PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time?

Yes, we use time cards to track employee work time.

2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant?

Yes

3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:

- Payroll? Yes
- Travel? Yes
- Overtime? N/A
- Timesheets? Yes
- Taxes? Yes
- Purchasing? Yes
- Compensated time off? Yes

4. Are employees time sheets approved? Yes

By whom (what position)? Executive Director & Program Director

By the Executive Director? N/A

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee?

Yes

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed?

Yes

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Additional Comments:

Grantee's record keeping and administration are in good order.

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started?

Our programs have evolved since our center opened in 1982 as North Suburban Life Care Center. We have always provided prenatal and parenting education as well as material assistance to mothers in crisis pregnancies. Our organization was started as an effort to protect life from conception and provide support to mothers contemplating abortion.

- What need does your program fulfill?

Our programs provide essential education and material assistance to low income families and women in crisis pregnancies. We are a critical resource for families in the community, providing education on Safe Sleep, Car Seat Safety, Abuse Prevention, Nutrition and many other related topics.

- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning?

Our program has grown not only in the scope of education and resources we offer but also in visibility to the community. We have moved to a larger and more accessible building in Little Canada, which can be reached by major freeways and public transportation. We have expanded the range of programs we offer to include not only the prenatal and parenting education offered through our Learn & Earn Program, but now also offer additional Life Coaching and maternal wellness education through the Well Life Program.

Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve?

Our program primarily serves expecting mothers and mothers with children 0-12 months.

- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage?

We mainly serve women between the ages of 15 and 35. The population served by the Center is very diverse. With 120 new clients each year, our clientele is composed of Hmong, Karen, Hispanic, African American, African, Native American, Nepalese and Caucasian individuals. Whenever possible, we accommodate the needs of clients who are still in the process learning the English language. Women's Life Care Center serves women who reside in St. Paul and its surrounding northern suburban area, including: Hugo, Mahtomedi, Maplewood, North St. Paul,

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Oakdale, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, Roseville, White Bear Lake and North St. Paul. The majority of our clients are low-income and in need of a broad array of services.

- Review recent Demographic reporting.

Our recent demographic reporting mirrors the information provided in the previous paragraph.

Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they?

Our Board of Directors, comprised of 9 individuals, is committed to empowering pregnant women to carry their pregnancies to term by offering options to abortion. The Board is a well-rounded and diverse team, with professional backgrounds in law, strategic planning, finance, childhood education and small business ownership.

- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges?

Our Board meets once per month. They provide direction and stability that continues to make the center a success throughout its 35 years of existence. The Executive Director and Program Director prepare a report each month to inform the board of the Center's progress and challenges. All members of the board are involved in policy making with input from the Executive Director.

- How supportive is the Board of the program?

The Board is extremely supportive of our programs and have collaborated in the past year to put together a strategic plan for the Center to capture the success of current programming and create a vision for our future.

- How is the program staffed? Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff?

The Center employs one Client Advocate who assists with free pregnancy tests, completes intakes for our educational program, educates clients regarding pregnancy, parenting, and abortion alternatives, and provides referrals to community resource agencies such as affordable housing, food shelves, free clothing organizations, and medical services. We have a Certified Life Coach on staff who is available to meet with clients during their educational sessions two days a week. In addition to our Life Coach and Client Advocates, we also have a Community Outreach Advocate.

The Program Director supervises the programs directly with assistance from the Executive Director where needed.

- How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there?

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We evaluate staff after 90 days of employment and again after 1 year. Our evaluations are performed by the Program Director and Executive Director and involve active collaboration with the staff member being reviewed. The Program Director is evaluated by the Executive Director. The Executive Director, in turn, is evaluated by the Board. Our staff, including Directors, have been with the center for 1-2 years on average.

- o How are staff background checks done?

We require all staff to grant the Center permission to perform a background check upon being hired. Some staff have not yet had background checks performed. We will be consulting with our affiliate, TLC, for further resources and will complete them as soon as possible.

- o What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients?

We do not have a policy in writing at this time but aim to have one completed as part of the employee handbook we are creating.

Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? **Yes**
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? **Yes**
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? **No**
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? **No**
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed. **N/A**

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- o If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source?

Our most common referral source is the clients themselves. We gain most of our clients through word of mouth recommendation. We also receive referrals from community agencies such as WIC, other life care centers, sidewalk counselors, social services and from local hospitals.

- o Challenges with partners or specific counties?

No

Work Plan

- o Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are

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asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.

- o **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

Our current programs include the Learn and Earn Education Program, the Car Seat Program, the Safe Sleep Program, and the Well Life Program. The Well Life Program was just added in July 2016. In addition, we also provide emergency assistance and necessary services such as Pregnancy Tests upon request. Through these programs we serve around 120 women each year. As of October 2016, we have added Life Coaching two days a week for the benefit our clients in the current programs. Since June 2016, there was a concern regarding the number of clients served compared to our more recent numbers. However, through our upgraded program structure, our programs now provide additional incentives and opportunities for learning in our client base. Since adding Life Coaching to our services, we have seen an increase in client commitment at the center: consistent participation in our Learn While You Earn program has increased by more than 30%, and the number of appointment cancellations has dramatically decreased.

- o Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons?

We do not anticipate making any changes at this time.

Participants:

- o What type of outreach does the organization put into action? What is working well?

Our outreach efforts are led by the Community Outreach Advocate. Our Community Outreach Advocate visits with several local agencies a month to create warm referral sources for our current clients as well as provide awareness of what we do for the community. Our hope is to also gain additional client referrals to our own Center through this outreach. Our Community Outreach Advocate also manages our social media accounts and websites and uses these avenues to generate interest and share the impact we are having within our local area.

- o What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients?

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We find that clients at times have difficulty keeping appointments due to transportation challenges, work schedules and obstacles in their personal lives. To combat these issues, our Executive Board, under the direction of our Program Director, reformatted the Client Assistance Program, to help offer transportation assistance in the form of bus passes and gas cards. We also try to work with clients' schedules and offer flexible appointment times. As of Spring 2016, we have extended our open hours from 15 hours a week to 21 hours a week. Our staff is dedicated to following up with clients who have difficulty keeping appointments.

Data:

o How is program data collected and by whom? Is data collected useful to agency?
Our program data collection is done through Salesforce. Client data is collected by staff. This data provides critical feedback to the center regarding the demographics of clients, the number of clients served, the education clients received and the items issued to clients.

o Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?
Not at this time.

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation? The current evaluation plan involves assessing their safe sleep education program. Data is being gathered with the final report due in July.

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share? Not at this time.
- Anything else we haven't asked? No.

What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?
We have found the past topics very useful, especially the topic of Human Trafficking. We would like to learn more about working with different cultures in the context of parenting, marriage and family life.
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive

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Alternatives Grant Program?

Summary:

Women's Life Care Center (WLCC) has been a long time grantee with the MDH Positive Alternatives Grant Program (PA). They have been funded for the PA 2016-19 grant cycle for the following programming: car seat education and distribution, safe sleep education and crib distribution, life skills education, nutrition education and support, parenting education and life coaching. WLCC is located in a strategic setting in the northern twin cities metro area where a large diverse population of women are served. The center is located near a bus line that offers transportation for those women who do not have access to getting to their appointments.

Transportation has been a limiting factor for many of the WLCC's clients. New help with transportation issues for clients includes offering gas cards and bus passes for those in need. This inclusion of transportation assistance has increased the rate of appointment check in of clients.

WLCC has had a transition in staffing the last year requiring a large learning curve for the new administrators of their programs and the administration of the PA grant. The new staff have been eager to clarify their role as PA grantees and the role required as a PA grantee. It is obvious that the new staff have had a positive influence on the organization's programming and future planning.

The work plan for Year 2 of the grant was discussed and staff suggested they will be modifying the plan slightly by adding the activity – "Case Management." A minor budget revision was also submitted and approved for Year 1 of the grant.

Outreach is a primary goal for WLCC. A staff member has been assigned the task of creating warm referrals to local community partners that will help to support and care for WLCC clients. The organization also has a media presence with a well-designed website and other social media accounts. Getting the word out in the community to increase the number of clients is the goal.

Demographic reporting documentation was also discussed. Numbers reported over the last year have noticeably declined. Further research was done by staff to try to fully understand and clarify these findings. A follow up meeting was scheduled to discuss the findings and understand the discrepancies. With the former staff being unavailable for consultation it was decided that current staff would continue to document their current client's demographics to the best of their understanding and instruction by the grant manager.

WLCC has been a responsible grantee and continues to use their PA grant funding responsibly. They submit all reporting in a timely manner and have been responsive to all requests for information. They provide a crucial service to a metro area with a diverse needy population. It has been a pleasure to work with WLCC to provide much needed services to women in unplanned pregnancies.

Date: June 15, 2017

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Grant Manager: Mary Ottman